

Examination of “Possible Field” for Young People in Different Education and Orientation Systems

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In such educational/professional orientations as choosing an educational field, a department, a program or a career plan, evaluation of preferences during the transition to an upper education level, determination of education level to be maintained, some forms of inequality become involved in from certain perspectives and create a problem of social equality. Inequalities becoming involved in the determination of young people's educational orientations, educational lines are not only related with individual capacities and limitations, inherited attributes, but also with factors surrounding an individual. Developmental status of the education system of a country is one of these factors. Of many individual and environmental factors, a country's education system and educational/professional orientation structures included in it create "capacity enhancing advantages" and "inhibitors in capacity development" on young people.

In developing countries like Turkey, since education system has not completed its structuring process, changes very frequently and is away from being stability and consistency, structures which are in effect in a country might be sources of inequity. In western societies, the existence of such rights as equality of opportunity, free compulsory education, orientation-participation in the decision to separate into fields, right to change field, opportunity to repeat a class to increase school success at a critical orientation stage, ability to apply to a transition possibility in order to enter a selected program frequently provides “capacity enhancing advantages”.

Amartya Sen's (2009) theory of social equity creates a very suitable basis for those who are vulnerable from certain aspects to be able to use environmental resources and question "the capability of orienting themselves". Amartya Sen defines social equity as an individual's choosing him/herself an education project which s/he sees valuable on reasonable grounds and as the "real" freedom which h/she has about maintaining their life styles. With the perspective of social equity and equality, individuals question the "possible field", that is to say, real possibilities which an individual has about the matters of taking action and involving in the development of social norms.

Purpose: In this study, it was aimed to investigate into the subject of real freedom (*capabilities to orient*) which young people from different countries have in order to reach a career which they really value. Within this framework, an answer was sought to this question: To what extent do young people living under unjust treatment conditions in different countries benefit from current rights included in their countries' educational systems to expand their possible fields with the aim of realizing their educational projects and reducing their victimhood?

In four different countries (Turkey, Iran, France and Canada (Quebec), it was investigated into possible fields of young people maintaining their education under unjust treatment conditions in terms of the possibility of transition to higher education within the current educational/vocational orientation structures of their countries. The comparison of four countries was realized in two stages. 1/ At macro level, through the description of the structures orienting student flow within the education and orientation system of every country, an attempt was made to understand legal resources/rights which young people of the countries can activate in the systems in which they are. 2/ At micro level, analyses were made into positive and/or negative transformation dynamic effects of legal/official possibilities put into effect in the education and orientation systems of four countries on young people's educational progression process.

Method: In this study aiming to examine the variables of a complex phenomenon like individual- context relationship in detail, the qualitative approach and biographic interview technique were used (Yıldırım and Şimşek,2008; Bonvin & Farvaque, 2007). Reports taken from one young person in each country about their own educational development processes were examined: Ilke from Turkey, Abad from Iran, Johan from France and Ariane from Quebec.

With the longitudinal analysis made over four biographic stories, it was aimed to reveal the young people's ways of evaluating their choices and the resources of which they made use for this purpose, key stages in their progression, the context and dynamics in which this process took place. The comparative analysis of the educational/vocational orientation systems and biographic education stories made it possible to understand the critical turning points of the educational process and personal and social transformation factors having a determinant effect on the real freedom which the young people have in transition to higher education.

Findings: In terms of real possibilities and capacity enhancing potentials which the education systems provide to their young people, each has advantageous or disadvantageous aspects specific to them. In Turkey and Iran, the existence of elimination and hierarchical elements determining the educational fate of the young predominates. In France and Quebec, it is observed that the educational/vocational orientation structures play a very important role in creating an equilibrium with the aim of increasing the real possibilities of the young against some negative transformation factors.

Suggestions: Biographic stories reveal the net effect appearing in different forms in every case in detail in the process bringing to higher education of determinant stages in the education system and environmental factors playing a role in these stages, supporting or hindering the freedom of the young and their families to benefit from current resources. Multi-dimensional studies examining dynamic interactions included in the structural context orienting the formation of young people's education within time by adapting to A. Sen's theory are needed.

Keywords: Amartya Sen's Theory of Social Equity, educational / vocational orientation biographical interview

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